

NEWS RELEASE

Task Force Hope

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Recovery Field Office Rear
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DAILY MISSISSIPPI RFO MEDIA UPDATE

September 18, 2005 1500 HRS CST

The Army Corps of Engineers' Task Force Hope Mississippi has 703 personnel from around the nation focused on recovery operations in the Mississippi Recovery Field Office (RFO), with weekly for the next several weeks. This number could eventually reach 1000 at peak recovery as the Vicksburg District sets up a district-size team to execute assigned FEMA missions.

(1) Debris Removal: Current Mission Pick Up Level, 21% Complete

FEMA estimates that there are currently about 18 to 20 million cubic yards of debris in the hurricane impacted area of Mississippi. This equates to 200 football fields piled 50 feet high. The Corps mission for now involves removing 5.8 million cubic yards. Debris equals that of about 4 Hurricane Andrews (media comparisons). Under our current missions, it will take about 8 months to remove it from the streets, and roughly a year and a half to completely dispose of it. **Our missions could increase as more counties come on line and FEMA offers additional assistance programs.**

Our Mississippi contractor is Ashbritt, Inc., of Pompano, Fla. To date, more than 350 large trucks are moving in Hancock County alone. The Corps expects the number of contract trucks hauling to increase by 50 a day for some time just in Hancock County. **Current debris removal would fill two football fields per day.**

The EPA and Coast Guard are working on targeting large scale hazardous materials, while the Corps is working on clearing debris on the roads and selectively removing hazardous materials as they are discovered.

Hazardous materials that end up at our reduction sites inadvertently will be culled out and placed in separate containment areas. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality monitors our work and issues permits for reduction sites.

We understand there is some concern about impacts associated with burning. We will recycle those things that make sense to recycle. Our debris mission, as a general rule, will use special incinerators and air curtains that limit smoke.

(2) Temporary Roofing: 14,000+ ask for OBR; production tops 700 roofs per day

Over 14,126 requests for Operation Blue Roof have been received in the past 10-14 days. Over 3,400 roofs have already been installed. More than 200 crews are now

working. Estimates are that 23,000 roof repairs will have been repaired when the mission is accomplished in the next 30-40 days. This mission will require an estimated 2 square miles of placed plastic roofing.

At peak, between 500-1000 roofs per day will be repaired, weather dependent. Plastic staging operations are in Hattiesburg and Gulfport. About two dozen **Operation Blue Roof Sign Up Centers** are now open in the impacted counties. Service number is Call-In Number 228-701-0588 or 1-888-ROOF-BLU. The self-help tarps are also being delivered to local EOCs for distribution.

(3) Temporary Housing

Temporary housing is being handled using a national/regional approach through the FEMA Housing Area Command.

(4) Technical Assistance

RFO technical experts are providing technical assistance as request from the state through FEMA.

(5) Water and Waste Water Restoration

After assessing waste water 46 systems, we have been requested to assist with restoring 7. 66 water systems are inoperable still. 17 of 20 waste water systems are inoperable.

(6) Restoring Public Facilities Using Portable Buildings

USACE has received a mission assignment to replace hundreds of Mississippi police stations, fire stations, city halls, post offices, government buildings and temporary classrooms on school property.

(7) Water and Ice: 107 miles of water and ice trucks

This mission is entering closeout phase. A total of 5500 trucks of ice, water, and MREs supported the Mississippi response. If the trucks had been on Highway 49 to Gulfport at the same time, the truck line would have stretched for 107 miles.

Mississippi deliveries totaled 100 million pounds of ice, 38 million liters of water, and 8.1 million MREs.

(8) Power

This mission is also about to enter closeout phase as power is restored. Of 415 assessments, 414 have been completed. Only 1 assessment was requested in the past 24 hours. 80 generators are currently installed to power critical services; 206 have been required at peak.